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ABSTRACT

Intended for Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) administrators and service deliverers, this publication provides those programs that are experiencing recruitment difficulties with new and innovative approaches to attracting eligible clients into their programs. It begins by listing the 10 most common recruitment marketing errors. Marketing is defined, and a marketing strategy for recruitment is proposed. Segmenting of the consumer market and zeroing in on the target market are then discussed. Market research is proposed as a method to learn more about potential customers. A two-step approach is suggested: review of social science research and assessment of specific needs. Recruitment shortfalls are then considered as a mismatch between the needs and attitudes of applicants and program services provided. Other topics include keeping down the cost to the client and distribution issues. After a general discussion of promotion, four specific types are addressed. Successful recruitment ideas and techniques used by JTPA programs across the country are provided for selling one-on-one, advertising, publicity/public relations, and sales promotions. A conclusion summarizes the recommendations made throughout the publication. (YLB)

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JTPA Recruitment Made (Much) Easier

By:
Jodie Sue Kelly

Prepared for the
National Association of Counties

April 1987

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JTPA RECRUITMENT MADE (MUCH) EASIER

TABLE OF CONTENTS

		Page
Preface		3
Executive Summary		5
JTPA Recruitment Made (Much) Easier		7
I.	Introduction	7
II.	The Ten Most Common Recruitment Marketing Errors	9
III.	Marketing: The Heart of Successful Recruitment	11
IV.	Zeroing in on Your Target Market	13
V.	Getting Inside Your Customer's Head	17
VI.	Three Big "Product" Issues	25
VII.	Keeping Down the Price of Admission	29
VIII.	Delivering the Goods	31
IX.	Secrets of Super Promotion	33
X.	Selling One-On-One	39
XI.	Advertising that Excites	43
XII.	Publicity/Public Relations	51
XIII.	Sales Promotions that Get Action	55
XIV.	Conclusion	57
About the Author		59
Index		61

PREFACE

The National Association of Counties (NACo) is pleased to publish this Issue Paper entitled "JTPA Recruitment Made (Much) Easier." We, at the National Association of Counties, are aware of the problems which Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) administrators and service deliverers experience around recruitment of eligible clients into training and employment programs. We recognize the potential seriousness of this problem for individual programs and for the training and employment system as a whole. For example, programs which are unable to recruit sufficient numbers of eligible clients to fill all training slots may be underspent. Underexpenditures by individual service delivery areas can contribute significantly to the larger system-wide underexpenditure of funds which has occurred between tran-sition year 1984 through programs year 1985.

We believe that this Issue Paper can provide those programs which are experiencing recruitment difficulties with new and innovative approaches to attracting eligible clients into their programs. Moreover, we believe that all programs -- whether or not they are experiencing recruitment problems -- can benefit from the ideas presented by Jodie Sue Kelly on the "selling" of JTPA.

This paper was sponsored by NACo's Training and Employment Programs, through a grant from the U.S. Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration. This paper does not reflect, necessarily, the views or opinions of the National Association of Counties, its Training and Employment Programs or the U.S. Department of Labor. It does reflect, however, the views and opinions of its author, Jodie Sue Kelly.

This paper is meant to stimulate discussion within the training and employment community. We would appreciate your comments on this paper. Please address your comments to Neil E. Bomberg, Research Associate and Editor, Issue Papers Series, National Association of Counties, 440 First Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20001.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Recruitment is a complex process that includes four major components:

1. How well your range of programs and services meet client needs.

2. The financial and psychological price clients pay to participate.

3. The time and location your services are available.

4. The effectiveness of your promotion.

Anyone working in job training can cite numerous reasons why it is hard to recruit clients. Some of the most common relate to the inability to pay stipends for training, the lack of transportation and the overall improvement in the nation's economy. In truth, the real problem lies in the failure of programs to properly market training and employment programs.

Marketing is an exchange process. In JTPA terms, clients offer their time and effort in exchange for training and placement they hope will increase their long-term earnings and employability. Programs must effectly communicate the message to potential clients that if they offer their time and effort they will receive the benefits of long-term earnings increases and employability.

One way to do this is to treat the entire market as a single undifferentiated homogeneous mass which you attempt to attract into your programs. A better way to achieve this is by segmenting the market so that you address the individual needs of a specific "sub-market". Generally, two types of segmenting are used: "psychographic" and "demographic." The latter is most often used by JTPA programs, and consists of segmenting the market based on age, race, sex and other demographic characteristics. The former is more sophisticated and divides the market according to shared needs, desires, dreams, attitudes or perceptions.

In order to assess which approach will work best, it is important to understand the customer. This can be done through market research, that is, research which helps you better understand your market. A good place to begin the

market research process is to review what social scientists have discovered about the attitudes, needs, desires and behaviors of economically disadvantaged persons. A second step is to find out about the specific needs of those living in your area through a simple survey of potential clients.

Many recruitment shortfalls are due to a mismatch between the needs and attitudes of applicants and the program services provided. These include program mismatches, difficult paperwork, dreary offices and the view by service providers that the training is free when, in fact, there is a cost to the client. One, therefore, must provide appropriate training, develop intake procedures which conform to client abilities, provide an up-lifting environment and find the balance between costs and perceived values so that customers are attracted to participate in the program. The easier you make it for participants to get in, the more opportunities JTPA will have to serve them.

Social services programs have tried many methods of reaching potential clients. Many JTPA programs rely heavily on just two or three techniques. Research shows that people must be exposed to an advertising message at least five times before they will take action. Moreover, some months are better for recruitment than others. Most have good luck from late August through early November and from March through May. Another consideration is to time your promotion when people are most likely to be receptive. But the biggest promotion mistake is that JTPA programs tend to focus on features and not benefits--it is the latter which sells products--and to overlook selling the program through personal selling techniques such as word-of-mouth, direct sales and "free" promotional workshops.

Ultimately, the goal must be to produce a steady stream of eligible applicants using a variety of media and techniques. This is not an easy task, but one that can be achieved and can result in dramatic increases in the numbers of clients which can be served.

JTPA RECRUITMENT MADE (MUCH) EASIER

I. INTRODUCTION

If you tend to believe that successful recruitment depends upon successful promotion, this paper may come as a surprise. What you have in your hands right now is not a grab-bag of advertising or public relations tricks--it's much more.

Our consulting work with JTPA programs has convinced us that inadequate promotion is not the major reason so many SDAs are suffering recruitment shortfalls. True, most JTPA promotion is nothing to brag about. In our experience, more than 90 percent of it fails to incorporate even the most rudimentary advertising rules and formulas.

But while your promotion may not be living up to its potential, it's still not your major obstacle to successful recruitment. To get a better idea of what we're hinting at, ask yourself the following questions:

1. What percentage of your eligible applicants fail to complete the enrollment process? (If your program is like most, you're probably losing one-half to two-thirds).

2. How have you modified your mix of training and placement services to meet the needs of the increasing numbers of clients with very poor academic and work skills? (If your program is typical, the answer is "not much.")

3. How many trips to your office must clients make in order to complete the enrollment process? (We know of programs that require five or more trips.)

4. Do your receptionists "sell" callers on the benefits of your services, or do they immediately begin reciting eligibility criteria? (Call your program anonymously and find out--you'll be surprised.)

5. Do applicants find your paperwork complex and difficult to read? (Ask a few to read the form aloud to you--you'll be horrified.)

6. How do most of your current clients first hear about you? (We'll bet the great majority are word-

of-mouth and agency referrals. In other words, your formal promotion is not your major recruitment tool.)

Are you beginning to get the big picture? Recruitment is a complex process that includes four major components:

1. How well your range of programs and services meet clients perceived needs.

2. The financial and psychological price they pay to participate.

3. The time and location your services are available.

4. The effectiveness of your promotion.

These are the four componenets of a terribly misunderstood yet valuable resource--marketing. We believe marketing offers the most powerful and practical system available to help you achieve top performance.

Most of our work over the past three years has been to use these marketing tools to solve problems of recruitment, placement and retention. So far, we have yet to encounter a JTPA problem that cannot be addressed rationally and cost-effectively with marketing concepts.

So this paper is not just a promotion guide, but a fresh and comprehensive re-thinking of your recruitment problems. Best of all, virtually all the recommended solutions will cost you little or nothing to implement. You won't need a fancy advertising agency to increase those recruitment (and positive termination) numbers.

We've concentrated on proven, practical strategies. Virtually everything in this paper has been tried successfully by at east one JTPA program or SDA. No single strategy or tactic can work miracles, or course. But we think you'll be surprised at how seemingly small changes in the way you do business can produce such large improvements.

We recommend that you read this paper from beginning to end at least once. Think broadly about your own recruitment problems. Trace the recruitment process through all its steps: program planning, outreach, intake, assessment, eligibility determination, and referral. Then, as you formulate your own strategy for action, turn to those sections of the paper that can help you the most.

You'll have a big head start if you think in terms of "marketing" your programs and not merely "promoting" them. We know. We've seen it work.

II. THE TEN MOST COMMON RECRUITMENT MARKETING ERRORS

Anyone who works in the field of job training probably can cite a dozen reasons why it is hard to recruit clients. Some of the most common reasons are:

- prohibition on the payment of stipends for training;
- lack of transportation;
- lack of motivation among clients; and
- overall improvement in the nation's economy.

Some of these conditions are "givens" and are part of the market in which JTPA does business. Others can and should be included in an overall recruitment strategy. But even though these factors make recruitment more difficult, it is up to you to make whatever adjustments in your program are necessary to attract more clients.

In their quest for solutions, however, many program decision-makers fall into one or more of the following traps. Listed below, tongue in cheek, are some of the culprits.

1. The "Holy Grail" Syndrome: believing that a sophisticated advertising campaign is the final solution to all recruitment and placement problems.

2. The "Status Quo" Syndrome: maintaining basically the same kinds of programs and services, even though the skills of incoming trainees have declined noticeably in recent years.

3. The "Let's Sell the PIC" Syndrome: focusing promotion on the PIC (which rarely provides direct services) instead of local programs (which do provide services).

4. The "Reinventing the Wheel" Syndrome: failing to maintain records of how many inquiries, enrollments or placements resulted from specific advertisements or media, so as to have some idea of how to allocate promotional resources.

5. The "Cookie-Cutter" Syndrome: ignoring the fact that most SDAs are made up of very different populations who will respond to different kinds of programs and promotions. This malady is present when too much attention is focused on the volume of customers and too little on the quality of services.

6. The "Let's Get the Motivated One" Syndrome: setting up cumbersome application, intake, eligibility, assessment and referral systems with the rationale that anyone that won't go through this tedious process probably isn't motivated enough to be successful in the program.

7. The "Awareness" Syndrome: believing that customers need only to be aware of JTPA services and do not have to be sold on them. Programs with this viewpoint tend also to have the "Let's Get the Motivated One" Syndrome".

8. The "Put Out the Fire" Syndrome: focusing attention on recruitment only when the numbers are down. As soon as the program gets back up to goal, attention shifts away from recruitment to some other problem.

9. The "Our Best Hunch" Syndrome: planning and executing promotional campaigns based only on staff intuition and understanding of economically disadvantaged persons.

10. The "Let's Humilate Them Into Joining" Syndrome: plastering degrading messages on all printed material. Examples include:

    - Are you economically disadvantaged?
    - Do you meet federal poverty guidelines?
    - Are you long-term unemployed?
    - Are you a high school dropout?
    - Do you receive food stamps?

III. MARKETING: THE HEART OF SUCCESSFUL RECRUITMENT

The term "marketing" is frequently misunderstood. It has been used as a synonym for sales, advertising, even publicity. Certainly all of these areas are a part of marketing but they are only a small part of the picture. Marketing is a comprehensive concept. It involves finding out what clients want and need and planning programs and services to meet those needs. It means meeting a need by offering a quality product at an affordable price in a convenient location under conditions that are reasonably attractive.

Essentially, marketing is an exchange process. In JTPA terms, clients offer their time and effort (while risking failure and perhaps giving up welfare benefits) in exchange for training and placement they hope will increase their long-term earnings and employability.

Obviously then, marketing is not an add-on. Marketing decisions include:

- the types of programs and services you offer;
- when and where training should be held;
- whether to use a centralized or decentralized intake center;
- how to answer the telephone;
- whether to offer transportation, day care or other support services;
- where your site should be located;
- which promotional messages to use; and
- which advertising media would be best.

A recruitment problem is not a cause of performance problems: it is symptomatic of one or more larger problems.

- the program could be unattractive to its target market;
- the promotion might not be reaching the appropriate audience;
- the program might be located in an area that is inconvenient to the potential applicant;
- the program could have entrance requirements that the target population cannot meet;
- the promotion might not be stressing appropriate benefits; and
- the application office might be intimidating.

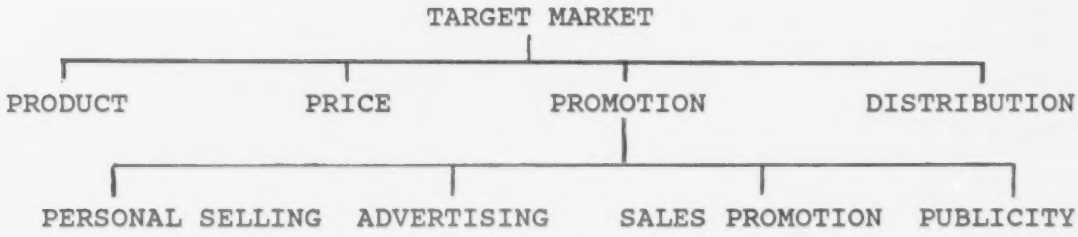
These are causes, lack of numbers is a symptom. You must be able to look beyond the symptoms to see the cause. By using the marketing model, you are able to examine all the causes of the problem. A comprehensive marketing strategy includes four major considerations:

- the product (program);
- the price (financial and psychological);
- how it is distributed (time and place); and
- how it is promoted.

Table I shows a marketing model and the relationships between product, price, distribution, promotion, sales, advertising and publicity.

TABLE I

THE MARKETING MODEL



IV. ZEROING IN ON YOUR TARGET MARKET

A private industry council, a service delivery area or individual program is said to be "production-oriented" if it treats its entire market as a single undifferentiated homogenous mass--hence the label "mass marketing." Job training programs that take this approach often have one brochure that is used both for job development and recruitment. Or they may have a single brochure used for all potential clients regardless of age, sex, race, program interest or other differentiating characteristics.

The far superior strategy is to segment the market. Segmenting is the process by which customers are divided into groups based on one or more shared needs and desires. Separate programs and promotions are then developed especially for each segment.

It has been known for a long time in the consumer market that targeted advertisements increase response rates hundreds of percent. Watch and study television commercials. Pick up a magazine and look at the advertisements. Every piece of advertising you encounter will be targeted. Try to figure out who the advertiser is trying to reach.

Generally two types of segmenting are used: "psychographic," and "demographic". The latter system, demographics, is most often used by JTPA contractors, and consists of dividing up customers by age, sex, educational attainment, welfare status and other descriptive features. This system is most popular in the job training community because it is the system used by the JTPA legislation to target services--veterans, welfare mothers, youth, adults, dropouts, older workers and others. For example, programs that need to recruit youth or older workers generally treat all youth or all older workers as being the same. A typical ad might say:

> Attention 16-21 year olds. We offer pre-employment training, job search assistance and counseling services. For more information, call 527-2385; or
>
> Are you looking for a job or training, 55 or older, and a resident of Waynesburg? Let us help. Call 527-8632.

Despite the demographic segmenting, however, both of these are very weak promotions. The reason is that no aspect of the message addresses unique characteristic of older workers or youth other than their age. This type of advertisement which merely identifies the customer, is called "flagging the prospect". These messages do not describe anything about the product or service that would make it seem special to the target population. It is a generic message.

In pyschographic segmenting, customers are divided into groups according to shared needs, desires, dreams, attitudes or perceptions. The most sophisticated segmenting combines demographic and psychographic attributes.

A more successfully targeted message would focus on a special aspect of training or on a psychographic characteristic of the target market. For example, in the youth market are more than a dozen segments, including:

1. youth 16-18 who are looking for a way to get started in the working world;
2. immature youth who view a job simply as a means to earn money for cars, clothes and entertainment;
3. single parents (mostly women) concerned about their young children;
4. youth primarily seeking a way to move away from home;
5. ethnic youth (Asian, Hispanic, Native American, Black and all other groups whose cultural identity, language, symbols, beliefs and values are different from mainstream white America);
6. youth who have not completed high school; and
7. offenders.

Among the older worker population there are:

1. those who are afraid that they are going to slip backward economically;
2. those who are lonely due to divorce, death and empty nests;
3. those who are not opposed to working but have never considered it;
4. those who are bored with retirement;
5. those who need a job as a primary income;
6. those who want a job as a second income; and
7. those who haven't actively looked for a job in so many years that they don't know where to begin.

Another population that can be broken into segments is the dislocated worker. Some of the more notable delineations are:

1. the older worker who has known no other job and thought he/she would work for the same company until retirement;
2. the younger worker;
3. the highly skilled;
4. the unskilled;
5. those who think they will be called back; and
6. those who accept that the layoff is permanent.

Even high school dropouts can be divided into different target groups psycho- and demo-graphically.

1. those who feel dropping out was a mistake;
2. those who feel education is not very important;
3. younger dropouts; and
4. people who dropped out when it was socially acceptable to quit school to get a job (an older group).

Obviously, one ad will not appeal to these different groups. Each will look at your program through very different eyes. Shown below are three advertisements that are psychographically targeted to segments of the JTPA market.

> Do you think your allowance is too low? Do you need more money than your parents can afford to give you?
>
> or:
>
> You've worked hard all your life raising your family. Now they are gone and you have time on your hands. Let us show you how to turn your spare time into dollars $$$.
>
> or:
>
> "I thought my future was secure with the company, then I got laid-off. I learned that I can't depend on a company. I have to look out for myself. I went down to XYZ . . ."

All three of these advertisements capture a state of mind felt by a segment of the client group. Notice that the first two advertisements were targeted not only psychographically but also by age. The age requirement, however, was implied. This same concept can be applied to an individual training program. For example, many JTPA programs offer nurses' aide and culinary arts training. The promotions JTPA has used generally have not been targeted to people who would be interested in these careers. Typical advertisements read:

> "Nurses' aide training program available. Duties include making beds, washing and dressing patients, delivering food trays, etc." or
>
> "Culinary arts program now beginning. Learn food preparation, storing and handling. 16 week program. etc."

A more targeted approach (and more effective) takes into consideration the unique characteristics of someone who would enjoy these careers. A message targeted psychographically would read:

> "Turn caring into a career. If you have a warm, loving personality and like to help others, we need you as a nurses' aide." or
>
> "Does the aroma of fresh baked bread turn your head? You can learn to prepare a feast and for a great future for yourself at the same time."

Successful recruitment marketing hinges upon the identification of target groups and the unique set of needs, desires, perceptions, hopes, fears and dreams of each. How do you begin this process?

The first step is to learn more about your customers. That is covered in the next chapter.

V. GETTING INSIDE OF YOUR CUSTOMER'S HEAD

You cannot begin to target and serve your customers successfully until you know a great deal about them. For example:

- What are their values and beliefs?
- What makes your targeted group different from other groups?
- Where do your clients live?
- What are their motivations?
- Which media do they come in contact with regularly?
- What are their hopes, dreams and fears?
- Are you offering services that they want?
- Which promotional messages are likely to appeal to them?
- Do they know anything about your agency?
- How do they currently spend their daylight hours?

Market research is an organized and useful way of finding objective answers to these questions.

JTPA professionals like to imagine that they know their customers well. They rely heavily on their experience and intuition. In marketing, that simply is not enough--especially in job training. You are in a position of "resource poverty". You cannot afford to make uninformed guesses about your targeted group because it wastes your time and limited dollars. How well do you know your customers?

Read each statement below and decide if you agree or disagree.

1. Youth think education is an important way to get better jobs.
2. Males place more value on education than females.
3. If a male applies to the program, the chances are greater that he will join the program if he talks to a male counselor.
4. Out of school youth listen to the radio in the largest numbers from 9 p.m. to 3 a. m.
5. Most disadvantaged youth are realistic about their economic situation and so recognize themselves as being poor.

Before you check your answers, think a moment at the implications of a wrong answer. You could put together a recruitment campaign for youth on the theme that education will help them get a better job. You could print 500 posters and tack them up all over town. You could send letters to the homes of high school dropouts. Your campaign would no

doubt fail, wasting your limited advertising resources and time, because the majority of poor inner city youth under the age of 25 do not think education is important for getting a good job. In fact, the closer to school age the youth is, the less value he or she will place of education. And if you decided to sell your education services as a way to bring in more males (of any age) you would be in for trouble. A 1986 study by the Coalition on Human Needs found that poor males thought education was less important than females.

An important point needs to made. Advertising will not change attitudes and behavior. For example, the federal government has hired some of the best advertising agencies in the country for over 20 years to try to convince the American public to wear seatbelts. Today less than 20% of the population wears a seatbelt voluntarily. Lawmakers have responded by passing legislation mandating seatbelt use.

Here's the answer to question 3:

> A male walks into the program. You really need to enroll some males. Two counselors are available to talk to the client--one is female and the other is male. Who should you pair the male client with if you want to increase the probability that he will join?
>
> According to one study, you would pair a male client with a female counselor. Is the reverse true? Should female clients be paired with male counselors? Unlike the male client, the sex of the counselor has no influence on the female client's behavior.

If you want to reach out of school youth, should you advertise on evening radio? After all, don't these youth stay up until all hours of the morning listening to the radio? A market research instrument given to 200 economically disadvantaged out-of-school youth showed that the highest radio listenership was between 6:00 a.m. and 9:00 a.m. Surprise.

As discussed earlier, many JTPA programs advertise services with phrases like, "Are you economically disadvantaged? Do you meet poverty guidelines?" How effective are these messages? They can only be effective if economically disadvantaged people read the advertisement and say to themselves, "Yes, that's me." Unfortunately for all those advertising programs for the impoverished, the majority of poor, when asked, do not think of themselves as poor. They see others as being worse off.

A good place to begin the market research process is to review what social scientists have discovered about the attitudes, perceptions and behaviors of economically disadvantaged persons--the "customer' for whom JTPA program services are supposedly tailored.

A sizable body of research has been conducted since the late 1960s to discover more about what makes disadvantaged persons unique. Not all JTPA customers are long-term poor, of course. Many are dislocated workers, veterans, re-entering housewives and others who have recently suffered an economic setback. On the other hand, the majority of JTPA clients are poor and have been for some time, even for generations.

In their research paper, "Low Income Lifestyles", Lola Irelan and Arthur Besner identify four major viewpoints that most poor people have about their role in society.

1. powerlessness;

2. meaninglessness;

3. anomie (alienation that results from a lack of personal purpose); and

4. isolation.

Irelan and Besner also identified four distinctive themes of lower class behavior:

1. fatalism;

2. orientation to the present;

3. authoritarianism; and

4. concreteness.

Demographers working for the private sector have made similar discoveries about economically disadvantaged persons. In his 1984 book, The Nine American Life Styles, Arnold Mitchell identifies two distinct classes among economically disadvantaged persons, the "survivors" and the "sustainers."

Survivors tend to be older (median age 66) and very poor (incomes averaged less than $7,500 in 1979). This group, says Mitchell, "tends to be despairing, depressed, withdrawn, mistrustful, rebellious about their situation, lacking in self-confidence, and finding little satisfaction in any aspect of their lives." Over 6 million Americans live the bleak lives of the survivors.

A notch above the survivors are the sustainers. They live at the edge of poverty and have erratic incomes--a fourth say they are unemployed or working part-time. Average income in 1979 was $11,000. Only 22 percent earned more than $15,000. Mitchell characterizes sustainers as "angry, distrustful, rebellious, anxious, combative people who often feel left out of things--but unlike the survivors, they have not given up hope." But among sustainers, "Mistrust of the system goes deep. Sustainers have less confidence in elected officials and corporate leaders than any other group." At the same time, however, "deep insecurities seem evident in the high need sustainers express to have social status and to feel part of a group."

Similiar findings are reported by Robert Settle and Pamela Alreck in their 1986 book, Why They Buy. Economically disadvantaged persons, whom they label "downscalers," do not believe they have "much influence or control over the external community, including the neighborhood, workplace, political jurisdictions and religious institutions. Sometimes feeling powerless and left out, they often think the world is controlled by a power elite, for good or for ill." In addition, say Settle and Alreck, "Downscalers see the world as risky and perhaps dangerous. They don't feel adequate to cope with loss or adversity, they're risk-adverse, and they use avoidance to maintain security."

Even today, poor persons are often held morally responsible for their predicament. But as many researchers have noted, their seeming inability to make wise and long-term decisions or to postpone immediate gratification stems less from moral inferiority than from hopelessness.

In her study, "The Working Poor," Dawn Day Washtel concludes that previous research clearly shows "the relative unimportance of motivation in determining whether a person was able to find work." Ultimately, she says, "If the poor perceive a situation that offers hope, they often do postpone and plan ahead."

These and other studies portray with startling clarity the deep psychological needs and desires of economically disadvantaged persons. Equally clear is how widely many of these attitudes and behaviors differ from their middle class counterparts.

Job training programs face enormous challenges to design products and services to satisfy customers notable for their feelings of powerlessness, suspicion, risk-avoidance and even open hostility. From the available market research, a general set of guidelines for product and service development emerges.

- To meet the needs of economically disadvantaged persons (and to deflect the inherent suspicion they harbor for society's institutions) social services should be highly personalized and supportive, empowering customers to make decisions about their own lives.

- Procedures should be simple, their rationale clear.

- Since low-income persons respond best to immediate rewards, positive reinforcement should be built into each phase of the intake or training process.

Thus, designing JTPA services is both a philosophical and a practical matter. Creation of an appropriate line of services will pay off quickly in terms of higher levels of recruits and customer satisfaction.

This overall picture of economically disadvantaged persons is helpful in planning programs and implementing marketing. But you also need information about the people that live in your own local area. In countless respects, there are broad gulfs among racial and ethnic groups, among rural, small-town and urban dwellers, among clients in different age groups and at different stages in life, and among personality types in the same groups and classes. Thus, of crucial importance to any JTPA program is ongoing market research information--data from applicants, enrollees and program dropouts on their needs, perceptions, desires and activities. This information can be extremely valuable in determining whether the current mix of program services meets client needs and which kinds of promotional campaigns are most likely to be effective.

Non-customers and negative terminations also have valuable information for you as well. People who have decided not to join your program or who quit can be your most valuable source of information. They can tell you how your services are not meeting their needs.

Several low-cost market research tools are available to you. Use these tools to gather ongoing information on your own about your targeted audience. Remember, the more information you gather and analyze, the better you'll understand your market and your position within that market. Here are some tactics:

- Collect data from program applicants on an ongoing basis. A questionnaire could easily be developed and given out to program applicants while they wait for a counselor to see them. The questionnaire would include questions such as the following:

1. Put a check mark beside all the ways you have heard about this program in the past:

_____ radio
_____ television
_____ saw a poster
_____ got a letter in the mail
_____ a friend or family member told me
_____ through my school
_____ through social services, probation, employment office
_____ some other way.

2. How many hours a day on the average per day do you listen to the radio?

_____ less than one hour per day
_____ one to two hours per day
_____ more than two but less than four hours per day
_____ four to six hours per day
_____ more than six hours per day

3. Do you listen to the radio mostly in the: (check as many as apply)

_____ early morning (6am-9am)
_____ late morning (9am-12pm)
_____ early afternoon (12pm-3pm)
_____ late afternoon (3pm-6pm)
_____ early evening (6pm-9pm)
_____ late evening (9pm-12am)
_____ late night (12am-6am)

4. Do you subscribe to cable television?

_____ yes
_____ no

5. If you had $5,000 what is the first thing you would buy?

_____

6. How important is education to getting a good job?

_____ very important
_____ somewhat important
_____ not very important
_____ does not help at all

Other questions could be related to television, newspaper, radio, hobbies, interests, handouts, eating out, hopes, dreams and aspirations. Analyze this information to guide your program decisions on how best to spend the limited advertising dollars available. The data collected will also provide a basis on which to build advertising themes and messages.

For example, if 75 percent of the respondents say they would use a gift of $10,000 to buy a home or move to a new neighborhood, then you can advertise your services as a way for clients to earn their way out of their current neighborhood and into a better life.

A study by the Coalition on Human Needs titled, "How the Poor Would Remedy Poverty," found that younger welfare receipents wanted to be independent and measured their independence by having a house of their own.

- Ask a program staff member to set aside four hours per month to call 20 to 30 previous participants or applicants. Questions would focus on the quality of their experience with the JTPA system.

  1. "If you were running the program, what changes would you make?"

  2. "Was the program what you thought it would be?"

  3. "Do you think the program should be longer, shorter or stay the same?

- Put suggestion boxes in the reception areas, classrooms and orientation facilities. This is critical because satisfied customers will tell (on average) seven people about their satisfaction, but a dissatisfied customer will tell 17. Eleven percent of the dissatisfied customers will tell 20 or more. However, if the dissatisfied customer has an opportunity to voice a complaint, then he or she will tell an average of four others about the complaint.

Because word of mouth is so critical to your recruitment effort, you need to capture the complaints internally and make program changes in response to the complaints.

- Pass out a questionnaire to the audience any time you address a group of people who could be part of your target population. For example, if you are speaking at a senior citizens' program, distribute a survey prior to or after your presentation.

- Go to a cheese distribution and interview people who are standing in line.

- Send surveys of satisfaction to all positive and negative terminees two months after their involvement in the programs. To increase the response rate, include a self-addressed, stamped envelope or offer a free meal at a local fast-food restuarant. Or try taping a nickel to the top of the page. Program staff could obtain coupons for a free or discounted meal as a donation from local restaurants.

VI. THREE BIG "PRODUCT" ISSUES

Many recruitment shortfalls are due to a mismatch between the needs and attitudes of applicants and the program services (including orientation, eligibility verification, the application, intake procedures and the range of available programs and support services).

Many JTPA programs lose from one-half to two-thirds of their applicants from inquiry through program enrollment. Assuming most were eligible (which is generally the case) then the promotion succeeded in bringing clients in to contact with the system, but either the staff did not convert them into enrollees or the process itself was so tedious and lacking in benefits to the client that he or she didn't follow through.

This is a product problem. No amount of advertising will solve it.

1. Program Mismatches:

Frequently programs are not matched to participant needs. For example, a program that requires a minimum ninth grade math level and eighth grade reading level will more than likely have difficulty recruiting enough clients. In today's economy, many people with skills of that level can get jobs without going through a JTPA program. On the opposite end of the spectrum, for those economically disadvantaged persons with low educational skills and limited work experience, the program offerings may seem too difficult and unappealing.

2. Difficult Paperwork:

Another problem is the application. Far too many JTPA applications require high level reading skills. The applications are difficult and intimidating. To illustrate, here is the introductory paragraph to a JTPA certification checklist used by a program:

> The State of (Anywhere) requires proof on paper for us to serve you. So certification is the formal process in establishing eligibility for the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) program. This process must be completed before you can receive services.
>
> The following is a checklist of documents you must bring with you for your scheduled appointments. All areas of eligibility require information documentation. No exceptions!! The following checked boxes are the information that you need to bring with you for certification.

Its intimidating tone is obvious. Examine the paragraph again. There are at least 24 words too difficult for the average JTPA client, who reads at the sixth or seventh grade level.

Compare the one above to this revised one:

> We are excited that you have taken the first step to a bright future. We'll help you free of charge. But first we need you to get a few simple but important papers. Please bring everything that has been checked below. If you have trouble getting all these papers, give us a call. We'll help you. Remember--before we can give you our free services, you must bring in everything checked.

In general, you want to write paperwork in an upbeat encouraging manner. Sentences should be no longer than 10 words and be written in the active voice. "We train you free," is active (subject/verb/object). "Free training will be provided by us," is passive (object/verb/subject). Individual words should be one syllable if possible.

3. Dreary Offices:

"Atmospherics" describes the conscious designing of space to create or reinforce specific effects on participants such as a feeling of well-being, or safety or hope. Every building conveys a feeling, whether intended or unplanned. Strive to create an environment that is bright, attractive, warm and full of hope. The environment--plus the attitudes of staff--will have measurable effects on the participants and on your recruitment success.

The atmosphere of the entire program should be uplifting. Staff should treat the client as if he or she is the most important person in the office. Clients should not be treated as interruptions.

The environment and mood of the office is very much a part of the program (and therefore part of the product you sell). Consider how the "atmosphere" of a building can affect participants. A program in an older building, with drab wall colors and worn furniture can project a depressed and hopeless feeling to applicants who are already depressed about their own conditions.

Marketing planners must use atmospherics as consciously and

skillfully as they use advertising, personal selling and public relations. The bottom line is that the sites themselves should be colorful, clean, physically and psychologically safe, and contribute to the overall positive feeling the programs are trying to sell.

VII. KEEPING DOWN THE PRICE OF ADMISSION

From the client perspective job training is free, right? Not at all. The "list price" or direct cost might be zero--clients do not have to pay tuition or user fees for JTPA services. However, in JTPA marketing, pricing includes the monetary, psychological and time-and-trouble costs of participating in programs. Your goal is to lower the direct and indirect costs and to increase the perceived value to maximize recruitment.

Consider the problem of encouraging more disadvantaged people to join a training program. A person's resistance might stem from several monetary and psychological "prices," including:

1. the relatively long amount of time of being in training;

2. loss of income while in training (opportunity cost);

3. the fear of another let-down;

4. the fear of change;

5. the time, cost and trouble of traveling a long distance to the center; and

6. the waiting in the office for orientation, assessment, verification or testing to begin.

From a marketing standpoint, the goal is the same as in any business--finding the balance between costs and perceived value that will bring in the most customers. In JTPA, costs to clients must be kept as low as possible, while perceived value must be high. For example, you should never talk to a potential client about eligibility and paperwork requirements before extolling the benefits your program has to offer. That is analogous to telling them the price before selling them on the product. Obviously, you have tell the client about the JTPA requirements --but there is a time and a place for doing it. It is not before you have sold them on some aspect of the program. Other ways to reduce the costs of JTPA involvement are to:

- limit the number of trips clients have to make to the intake center;

- have prewritten form letters which an intake worker can fill in and mail to previous employers for income figures;
- help clients gather paperwork;
- reduce the length of the training programs;
- provide transportation tokens;
- help arrange day care;
- arrange part-time jobs for clients while they complete training; and
- install an answering machine so clients can leave messages and respond to ads at their convenience.

In summary, the easier you make it for participants to get in (although in all candor it is by law a very tedious process) the more opportunites the JTPA system has to serve them.

The previous discussion covered how to decrease the price of enrolling in JTPA. The discussion of increasing value will be covered more indepth in the promotion section. However, they are also listed here:

- promote benefits;
- give dollar values to the training you provide;
- tell applicants all the tangible products they will receive; and
- inform clients of supportive services for which they are eligible

VIII. DELIVERING THE GOODS

In marketing, distribution (or "place") refers to the locations of services and the systems by which they are provided to clients. These distribution issues have a big impact on recruitment but are often overlooked. Start by reflecting upon the actual location of your services. If clients must, on their own, go to several different centers for applications, intake, assessment, and orientation then recognize that for every additional stop you will lose some portion of your recruits.

From a marketing standpoint, it is better to have "one stop shopping." The entire application-eligibility-orientation process is best conducted at one site. Further, it is best that this process take place at the actual program site. If eligibility determination is done by some other agency, see if you can get them to come to your site regularly to certify your recruits.

For recruitment, another important distribution issue is the time of day that you make your services accessible. For example, if you will accept applications only on Monday and Tuesday mornings from 8:00 to 11:30, then you are limiting your recruitment prospects. For certain segments of your target population, those times will be inconvenient. You want to encourage them to come in as quickly as possible. People call your agency when they are hot prospects. Don't let them get "cold" by making them wait a week--or even a few days.

Other distribution issues include:

- whether you require appointments (unless you are a large organization and can't handle the influx, "no appointment necessary" is better);
- parking; and
- the availability of mass transit or transportation services to your service center.

IX. SECRETS OF SUPER PROMOTION

Social services programs have tried many methods of reaching their potential clients: personal selling, advertising, publicity and sales promotions. Many JTPA programs rely heavily on just two or three techniques: typically want ads, word-of-mouth and agency referrals. While these techniques are among the most powerful, a wider variety will reach a greater number of the target population. A word about expectations: JTPA staff often expect promotion to work miracles. But promotion does not solve product, price or distribution problems. Also staff have overinflated hopes because promotional efforts are generally tried only after a recruitment problem exists (rather than using techniques consistently).

Direct mail is a good example. If you send 600 flyers in the monthly AFDC check, a good response rate would be from 6 to 15 inquiries. Of these responses 3 or 4 enrollments might result. This is not a poor response rate, in fact, it is very good. An excellent response rate would be anything above 15 inquiries and 6 enrollments. Yet time and again, staff are disappointed by the response rate because the expectation was too high.

Research shows that people must be exposed to an advertising message at least five times before they will take action. Do not give up too soon. If you send out flyers once and get a limited response, don't stop. You have to reach that same group of people at least four more times. And if economically disadvantaged persons are more skeptical than the general population, then you must reach them more than five times.

Another reason that reponse rates are generally not as high as program staff would like has to do with the recruitment cycles that all programs experience. Some months are better for recruitment than others. Most programs have good luck from late August through early November. Another good recruitment period is March through May (however, this period peaks far short of the fall recruitment drive). Of course, any individual program experience may differ from this illustration. But knowing that these recruitment cycles exist, programs can plan advertising, using one of the three strategies illustrated below:

1. The first is to advertise most during the slow cycles in an attempt to compensate for the low recruitment months. In advertising this in not a wise strategy and your response rate will be low.

2. The second strategy is to advertise consistently regardless of recruitment cycles and numbers. Again, this is not a wise strategy decision because you are not taking advantage of the times that customers are psychologically ready to buy--ready to do something about their lives.

3. The third strategy is to time your advertising to coincide with the recruitment cycles that you already know exist. This is the preferred way. This will allow you to capitilize on the high times, remain in the public view during the low cycles and thus get the maximum traffic at the lowest cost.

Another consideration is to time your promotion when people are most likely to respond to you. For example, right after they receive an AFDC, unemployment, or social security check, a potential customer may not feel the need to look for a job. That may be the reason why JTPA ads sent with AFDC checks often produce such poor results. The week prior to the delivery of their next check, they may be much more prone to respond to your offer because they have very little money left. You need to plan your promotions accordingly.

Yet, the biggest promotion mistake job training programs make is focusing on features rather than benefits. A feature is a description of your services. For example, pre-employment training, job development services, post-placement follow-up, GED classes or OJT are all program features.

These features, including how your organization is funded, how it came into being, and how the organization is staffed are all inconsequential to the customer. They are features. Before you buy a car, Ford, GM and Chrysler do not make you memorize the history of their companies.

What is a benefit? A benefit is a solution to a customer problem or need (from the customer's point of view) and answers the question, "What is in it for me?"

Feature statements are generally written in the first person--they are egocentric. "We do this. . . We provide. . . Our office . . . " On the other hand, benefits are written from the clients' perspective so are generally written as "you" statements. "You could be eligible for free tuition. . . Call today (implied you). . . You'll learn . . ." This is a general rule with few exceptions.

Examine the following six statements. Which are features and which are benefits?

1. Summer jobs!! The JTPA summer program is due to begin.

2. Your ten week program gives you entry into a new and fast growing job market.

3. We have made our program very short. It is only 20 hours long. After that we offer job placement assistance.

4. The XYZ training program has placed more than 62 people in jobs this year.

5. Earn up to $1,700 in just nine weeks this summer!

6. The children are in school. They need help with their homework. Learn the math and English you need to help you and your children get ahead.

The benefits statements are numbers two, five and six. Compare statements one and five. Number one is a feature. It merely announces that a service is available and does not strive to meet a need of the target population. Number three fails to the so-what-does-this-mean-to-me test. An improved version would be, "In just 20 short hours, you'll have the skills to get a job that matches your interests and abilities." Number four is a feature. A benefit statement would add, "You can be our next success story."

Many JTPA advertisements and posters announce, "Need A Job? Need a Skill?" or some similar message. On the surface, this may seem like a benefits orientation. It may be, but it is very weak and not particularly effective. It is as if General Motors announced in its ads, "Need Transportation? We have it." Certainly, people buy cars to go from one place to another. But they buy cars for many more reasons as well, some of which may rank much higher than simple transportation. Among these reasons are:

1. to be practical and thrifty;
2. to gain status over one's peers;
3. to be sexy;
4. to gain peace of mind about the likelihood of breakdowns; and
5. to pretend to be a race car driver.

Advertisements that aim to meet these needs (benefits) will out-sell advertisements that announce transportation (feature).

Why would applicants want to buy job training services? What does the job training program really represent?

Disadvantaged people "buy" JTPA for the benefits they derive from it. "Training" and "employment" are only the two broadest descriptions of what clients receive. In truth, jobs and training mean many different things to different people. For some it's a chance to be independent, for others it's security, for still others it's to be liked. Programs should not emphasize the availability of a classroom training program, but its outcomes: more money, a better job, a better life for the client's family, self-respect, an apartment of his or her own, a car, new clothes, a vacation, and so on.

Other outcomes include:

1. convenience;
2. saving time;
3. a chance to make money;
4. hope for a better future;
5. a chance to make friends and be accepted;
6. it makes finding a job easier;
7. security;
8. an opportunity to learn and gain knowledge;
9. independence; and
10. an opportunity to buy something in particular (house, cars).

Not all applicants will be motivated by all ten benefits. The appropriate set of benefits will be different for different target groups.

A JTPA program in Michigan printed posters that capitalized on these needs. One excellent poster showed three girls in an apartment sitting on the bed. One was talking on the phone, another was filing her nails and another was getting a pizza from a delivery boy. A radio and television blared in the background. A fourth girl was looking at the other three and thinking to herself, "I want to get my own apartment. I had better call Community Job Training." The poster identified a need and provided a way to solve the problem. It did not sell jobs, it sold apartments. It went beyond the "jobs" and "training" basics. Regardless of whether you are writing letters, posters, flyers, brochures, radio announcements,

whether you are giving a speech, answering the telephone, presenting an orientation, or explaining the program--always use benefits. They outsell features hands down. When should you use features? Never.

As you create benefit statements, use the following 18 words, which Yale University found to be the most persuasive in the English language.

you	benefits	results
free	money	love
proven	guarantee	safety
easy	health	save
new	discover	sale
yes	announcing	now

The word "free" is always powerful. However, to make it more effective and to help you solve retention problems, do not just announce something is free. Add value to your statement. It is the difference between saying, "Free training can be yours," and "Training, worth $779, can be yours free, if you qualify." The second benefit statement is stronger because it makes the training sound more valuable and a better bargain. Retention should improve because it is more difficult to walk away from something free but worth $779 than something that was free but of unknown value.

Other ways to add value are to say that the participant could be eligible for a training scholarship that is worth $779. Going back to the earlier discussion of price, your goal is to decrease the participant's perceived cost or increase the value so its worth the price. Adding dollar value and promoting benefits increase the value of your programs.

You don't have to use the cost of the training to add value. You can also compute the average weekly or monthly wage earned by a participant and say, "Earn over $600 a month." For clients who want to feel like they belong, you can use, "Join the Team." Other clients want power, status and respect. A headline like, "Take charge. Be a Leader," would add value for them.

When promoting your program avoid JTPA jargon terms such as classroom training, pre-employment training, try-out employment, OJT, on-the-job training, direct placement, job development, GED, HSG, PIC, JTPA, SDA, certification, intake and vouchers. Within each state and locality, many other JTPA terms have been created which also should be avoided.

Instead of using jargon, explain what you mean in benefits terminology. For example, OJT (which to most Americans means Orange Juice by Tropicana) can be sold as an opportunity to earn while you learn. The points in this section are essential for any form of promotion. Our discussion now turns to the four specific types of promotion. Each section contains successful recruitment ideas and techniques used by JTPA programs across the country.

X. SELLING ONE-ON-ONE

This is perhaps the most overlooked yet most important resource in the recruitment toolchest. No SDA or program doubts personal selling's importance in job development. Yet, this sensitivity often disappears when the focus is client recruitment. In virtually all instances, potential recruits make their decision to join a training program based on the personal sales skills of counselors, not because of on brochures, ads, posters and flyers.

Sales begins the moment a client telephones or walks through the door. Advertising, publicity and sales promotions only serve to bring the potential recruit in contact with the "sales force".

There is a crucial difference, of course, in "selling" a service and simply making it available. Throughout the JTPA system, this latter--and less effective--approach is generally taken. Advertising materials usually describe the features of the program; the orientation session is basically a listing of available programs and eligibility; and the telephones are answered as though people didn't need to be convinced to come down. To put this in perspective think about exercise, for a moment. Everybody knows that they should exercise regularly. To make exercise easier and more fun, health spas have opened all over the country. Yet, if a health spa responded to telephone inquiries with, "Just come down," and at the introductory sessions only told customers about the equipment, they would go bankrupt. Instead, health spa staff tell you that through exercise you'll look and feel younger, live longer, and be able to eat more because your metabolism will rise. They don't just describe the various equipment; they tell you that a piece of equipment will shape your thighs, will flatten your stomach or will build a shapely upper body. It is sales all the way. They know better than to simply make their services available.

As noted earlier, JTPA increasingly is dealing with very difficult to serve populations. Possessing low skills, low self-esteen and poor work habits, these people are naturally skeptical about their chances for success. Listed below are nine personal selling techniques and strategies that you can use to your recruitment advantage.

1. Word-of-mouth is one of the most powerful recruitment tools. Rather than just allowing it to happen, you want to control and manipulate it. The first

and most important step is to ensure that you are running a quality program that participants will want to talk about positively to their friends and family. Second, organize a recruitment contest. Give each program enrollee ten staff busness cards Have participants write their names on the back of each card. Instruct the trainee to distribute the cards to family or friends who may be looking for a job. For every new applicant who brings in a business card, the trainee will be given some small prize. Prizes could include coupons for a free meal at a fast food restuarant, discount coupons for a local retail establishment, or an agency t-shirt. The point is to give your current participants an added incentive for selling the program. When you use this technique, be sure that the current trainees can describe your program appropriately.

2. Another method of using word-of-mouth is to organize your past and present participants to put flyers in housing projects, hang posters, hand out brochures and talk to their family and friends. At the very least it is important to remind past participants that you still exist and to continue telling others about your services.

3. Staff and participants can go door-to-door in poor neighborhoods and talk to residents about the program services.

4. Program receptionists must be trained in sales skills. Far too many times job training programs scare potential trainees away by talking about eligibility requirements within the first few seconds of a telephone call. Another blunder is to tell a caller, "Well, you'll have to come in and fill out an application. We will be offering orientation Wednesday at 10. They'll explain the program then." At that point, you have let your customer off the hook without making a commitment or getting him or her excited. Receptionists, intake workers, and certifiers must learn how to use sales techniques (just like job developers) to get the prospect excited about joining JTPA. It is important to discover what the caller needs, then to offer benefits that correspond to the need.

5. To test the customer-responsiveness of your agency, have a friend or relative call your office. Have

them say, "Hi, I am looking for a job. Someone told me that you would get me a job." Note how your telephone is being answered. Receptionists are customer service personnel and should be trained as such.

6. If your program is typical, you lose up to 50 percent or more of all applicants during orientation. That may be because you're boring them to death. Many orientations begin with a history of the JTPA legislation, followed by a feature-oriented description of all the programs that are offered. To be blunt, orientations like this are boring and hurt your recruitment effort. Applicants may go away thinking that if this is a sample of your services, then forget it. Orientation is a selling situation, not information dissemination. Orientations must be uplifting, full of hope, hype and sales.

7. Try calling recent applicants who dropped out. When you call, open the conversation with a benefit like, "When you applied to our program a few months ago you were looking for a job. Right now we have more jobs than people to fill those jobs," or "You applied to the XYZ training program a few months ago. You said you'd like to attend our mechanics' training course (which is free to you). We have five openings in that course and I'd like to save one of those openings for you."

8. Many states require that students who want to drop-out of school meet with a high school guidance counselor. Therefore, take packets of information to each counselor in the school districts of your area. Ask the counselor to give all students a packet during their exit interviews.

9. To recruit youth, provide "free" workshops to juniors and seniors in their high school classes or in the auditorium on "How to Select a Career" or "Where the Jobs Are." Do a short commercial for your program at the conclusion of the presentation. Always, always, always distribute a market research survey.

XI. ADVERTISING THAT EXCITES

It is well to keep in mind that an advertising "Holy Grail" does not exist. No single campaign is likely to triple enrollments, for example. A campaign that works this week may lose its effectiveness next week. And no strategy works equally well with all segments of the JTPA client population. The goal is to produce a steady stream of eligible applicants using a variety of media and techniques.

Several experts claim that advertising is 80 percent formula and 20 percent creativity. The "Rules to Write By" list below provides guidelines that should be followed for all written promotional materials.

Rules to Write By:

- Benefits statements.
- No jargon.
- No paragraph has more than five lines. No sentence has more than ten words. Three fourths of all words should have one syllable.
- Keep the total number of words to a minimum, 75 at most. Remember--most JTPA clients are poor readers.
- Always have a strong call to action. Examples are: "Call today", "While you are thinking about it, call now","Reserve your space today." Do not say, "Drop by our office." It is not strong enough.
- Headlines should always be major benefits.
- Use secondary headlines. These are also benefits and serve to draw the reader through the copy.
- Be positive. Don't show a picture of someone who is down and out accompanied by a headline, "Do you feel like your life is over?" When Revlon is trying to sell make-up, they don't show homely women. When Weight Watchers sells you their diet plan or their frozen foods, they don't show obese people. The only way you might see a homely woman or an overweight person is in a before and after photo.
- Use testimonials. What other satisfied users have to say about your product is far more credible than anything you say about yourself.

- Write in the second person--use "you" copy.

The following techniques that have proven to be successful in other job training programs.

- Classified advertising. Again, don't forget to do your market research. One program found through a market research instrument that out of school youth in a rural area were most likely to read the help wanted ads on Saturdays. Yet because the newspaper gave the program a good deal on Wednesday through Friday advertising, their advertisements had been running then and not doing well.

- Send letters to clergy asking them to make announcements in church bulletins, to hang posters or notices on the bulletin board and to put an article in their church newsletter. Be careful here. Avoid phrases such as, "If you are economically disadvantaged, out of work, receive public assistance or food stamps." These are negative and will turn people off. Besides doing nothing to inspire your clients this type of negative message does not help your job developers who have to go out and try to undo in employers' minds what your advertising just accomplished. Your message should always be positive and upbeat. It should bring hope to the reader. It should make them feel good about their decision to come in and talk to you. Avon doesn't advertise makeup by saying, "If you are homely, have bad skin, and are unattractive to the opposite sex you need our product." You shouldn't either.

- Insert flyers in AFDC and unemployment checks. This not only cuts the cost of your mailing but also reaches a prime audience. However, this will probably not be as effective as sending out a separate mailing to AFDC receipents in the middle of the month when their money gets low. Timing is important.

- Because the majority of the JTPA audience are non-readers you should rely much more heavily on art than words. You are right if you are thinking to yourself, "But many clients do read." True, many can read but they do not enjoy it. The poor spend less money on magazines, books, and newspapers than any other group in the population. And not just because they are poor.

- Send a letter to everyone on the high school drop-out list for the last five years. If the school

will not give you a list of dropouts, then give them some pre-stamped packets and ask them to label and send out your literature.

- Send a letter to the parents of students who get reduced-cost lunches.

- Every three months, send a letter or flyer to everyone who applied to your program, called but never came in, or sat through orientation then decided not to come back. Of all the lists you have (or should have) these are the most valuable which means you should be keeping a telephone log, application file and rientation attendance list.

In direct mail, there are two types of lists: "compiled" and "responder". Responder lists are always better--they can improve your response rates as much as 500 percent! Some example of compiled lists are everyone who lives in a certain neighborhood, who gets ADFC or who left school before graduating. A compiled list is a group of potential customers who have not expressed any interest in your product or a similar one.

A "responder" list is a group of people who have made some effort to get your product or something similar. To illustrate, if you are a subscriber to Prevention Magazine then you have identified yourself as being concerned with health related issues.

Therefore, you will get direct mail packages from publishers of other health related magazines, newsletters and book clubs. This is because you are statistically much more likely to subscribe to a second magazine on health than is your next door neighbor who is not a Prevention subscriber.

In the same way, people who have contacted your agency, gone through orientation or walked into the employment office looking for a job are far more likely and easily convinced to join your program than anyone on a compiled list.

This is not to say that you should not ever use a compiled list, merely to concentrate on people who have come in contact with your agency.

Now what should your letter say? Going back to features and benefits, compare these two openings to a person who has successfully completed the eligibility process but did not enroll:

> "Your 45 day limit is about to expire. If you still want our services call 527-2386 between 9:00 and 4:00 Monday through Friday", or

"If we are going to help you find a good job, we need to hear from you right away." The second opening is by far the stronger. It reminds the applicant of the major benefit of the program.

- Set up booths at shopping malls and fairs. Because most people will avoid a booth and will throw away your literature within minutes of receiving it, booths often have not been successful. However, by raffling off something and charging from zero to $.25 per ticket you can get many people to come over to the booth. Have material sitting out that they can take. However, the more important thing is to get them to write their name, address, home and work phone on the raffle ticket. Anyone without a work phone should be recontacted after the drawing.

- Arrange to have flyers placed in grocery bags. Market research shows that the poor tend to purchase and prepare food on a day-to-day basis, shop more often, buy smaller size packages and buy less at any one visit to the store. They like convenience stores or small "mom and pop" stores near home. So when distributing flyers go to the neighborhood establishments and ask them to put flyers in bags for about a week.

- Print ads on the sides of plastic bags and give them to small stores to use and distribute or give them out at a booth in a shopping mall. Most people don't throw bags away but keep them for future use.

- Print tabletop "tents" or placemats and distribute them to fast food chains and local bars and restuarants. Economically disadvantaged persons eat out once a week, on average, generally breakfast and on the weekend.

- Place an advertisement in the Yellow Pages under "employment agencies". To find you in the white pages, a customer would have to know your agency's name. Finding a job training program often takes real detective work. If someone hears about your program, he or she should be able to look you up easily.

- Use business cards to your advantage. For large corporations business cards can be plain and straight forward. However, for a JTPA program, that business card should contain a lot more information. It should sell the primary benefits of your services, double as a brochure, a circular, and a wallet-sized advertisement. Go for the fold-over type business card. Ask for a sample at your local printer. It is well worth the extra investment. Then months later, if someone picks up the card the benefits are clear because they will be listed.

- Put posters in high volume areas. Once again, be careful that your poster is positive and uplifting. It should be the type of poster that people would not be embarrassed to stand in front of and read. It should talk about outcomes not process. The poster should show pictures of people in graduation gowns, people working in desirable jobs, or people in new clothes standing beside new cars. It should not show pictures of people sitting in classrooms or waiting in lines at your office. Because most people do not carry pen and paper with them, use tear off coupons which have your agency's name, address, telephone, hours and a few key benefits. Alternatively, devise a phone number that spells a message, such as:

  J-O-B-S-N-O-W,

  or

  J-O-B-S-R-U-S.

- Posters can be placed in the following locations:

  --housing projects
  --drivers' license office
  --social security office
  --employment office
  --local bars, restuarants and grocery stores
  --laundromats
  --recreation and community centers
  --cheese distribution locations
  --bus and train stations
  --churches
  --libraries
  --shopping centers
  --medical and dental offices and clinics
  --social service office
  --food stamp office
  --child health care centers

- Buy an advertisement in the high school yearbook.

- Print book covers to distribute to all high school juniors and seniors. One program sold advertising space on the back of the book covers to local merchants. The net cost to the program was zero.

- Have an advertisement printed on balloons. Fill the balloons with helium and give them away during the summer at public swimming pools, in shopping malls, at county fairs, in downtown areas--anywhere people congregate. Kids love them and will take them home.

- Have emergency telephone number stickers printed. List emergency numbers such as police, ambulance, fire house and "job help". Give the stickers out at cheese distributions or through a mailing to all AFDC recepients.

- Buy space ads in various sections of the newspaper. Do not always rely of the help wanted sections. For example, market research shows that the 55 and older population read the food and recipe section of the newspaper in higher percentage than any other segment of the population. Highest readership among men is the sports section of the Monday paper.

- Use radio and television effectively. Both will run public service announcements for you at no charge. However, PSAs are generally broadcast when the station cannot sell advertising space. Why can't they sell it? Because the audience is too small. So while PSAs are cheap, buying air time is better. For radio and TV advertising, seek professional help. Both are tricky mediums and should not be attempted by amateurs. Free help can be obtained at local universities and training schools that have broadcast divisions. Radio and TV stations will also provide assistance.

- Experiment with MTV. Some programs have worked with universities to produce video type commercials for their youth programs and then have had the ads played on MTV at surprisingly low cost.

- Advertise on cable TV. One market research survey showed that 64 percent of eligible economically disadvantaged persons have cable television.

- Many movie theaters across the country are now showing commercials and public service announcements prior to the featured film. In the Washington, D. C. area ads are single slides. How often do economically disadvantaged persons go to the movies? One survey showed about once a month.

- Advertise on billboards, barns, park benches, taxicabs, buses and in subways.

- Avoid hand-drawn art because it lacks the professional image you want to create. Use clip-art and press-type if you are a "do-it-yourselfer". Find out more at your local art supply store.

- Advertise specific job openings if you have them. You will get a higher response rate than when you advertise training and services. Additionally, a study conducted by the Oregon Consortium showed that participants who responded to an ad that listed a specific job title had a statistically significant higher retention rate in the program and on the job than did a participant who responded to a general purpose training and services ad.

- Take the time to measure your response rates. You want to measure both the cost per inquiry and the cost per enrollment. The cost per inquiry is the total cost of the ad (poster, brochure, classified) divided by the number of people who called or came in as a result of seeing the ad. Likewise, the cost per enrollment is the total cost of the advertising divided by the number of people who were enrolled. (These measurements can only be taken if you ask people how they heard about the program.) These two measures are important because they let you compare two techniques or two messages to see which is the most cost effective.

XII. PUBLICITY/PUBLIC RELATIONS

Publicity is favorable free exposure of your program on radio, television or through some other medium. Someone once said that "Publicity is sent to a medium and prayed for while advertising is sent to a medium and paid for." A good recruitment strategy will use publicity but will not rely on it entirely. You don't want to spend all your time praying.

Let's examine the major public relations media and tools at your disposal.

- Placing articles in community and school newspapers. These can be success stories, special event announcements, and letters to the editor. Programs have written and placed articles identifying those participants who have obtained a job, GED or been accepted into college. Articles with photos are generally more effective as a recruitment tool. Getting media organizations to accept press releases requires marketing skills. You have to understand the need of the press for stories that are interesting and timely. Press releases should be well written and eye-catching. The better ones are human interest stories.

- Encourage employers to refer job applicants whom they have not hired.

- Arrange to have announcements read over the public address system of the high schools.

- Appear as a guest on radio and television talk shows.

- Submit PSAs to radio and television stations. Write to the FCC and (send a carbon to the station manager) praise any station that has been particularly cooperative in airing your announcements.

- Send news releases to local radio and TV stations.

- Encourage news coverage of program activities.

- Contact other local social service agencies and exchange referrals. Agencies that should be contacted include:

Vocational Rehabilitation;
Battered Women's Shelters;
Crisis Hotlines;
United Way;
Mental Health;
Big Brothers/Big Sisters;
Children Services;
Public Assistance/Welfare;
Drug and Alcohol Clinics;
Juvenile and Adult Probation;
Family Services;
Halfway Houses;
Group Homes;
Detention Centers;
Legal Aid;
Planned Parenthood;
Teacher and Professional Organizations;
Employment Offices;
Union Halls;
Interagency Meetings;
NAACP; and
Groups Serving Minority Populations.

- Always let referring agencies know when their client signed up with JTPA. Tell them if the client has been enrolled or has been placed in a job.

- If your agency holds fund-raisers (car washes, bakesales, etc.) give each customer literature about your services.

- Construct a float for a local parade.

- Hold an open house.

- Set up a booth at career day in high schools and local colleges.

- Speak at senior citizen centers, high school assemblies, at church group meetings and other places where potential trainees might congregate. Always pass out a market research instrument.

- Sponsor career workshops. Promote them heavily in poor neighborhoods.

- Refer ineligible people to jobs that cannot be filled by your eligible participants. This will help your positive word of mouth.

- Produce and distribute a program newsletter that is specifically geared to participants (as opposed to employers and community officials). Send the newsletter to past applicants, anyone on any mailing list that you have and to positive program completers.

Because JTPA clients are poor readers, keep the newsletter very short, use pictures, and simple sentences.

XIII. SALES PROMOTIONS THAT GET ACTION

Sales promotions include a variety of interesting and little used promotional tools that can boost customer response in the short term. A sales promotion offers some added benefit for immediate response. It is generally an offer with a specific deadline (expires after some date) or limited in number (only the first fifty people who respond). A sales promotion tells clients that this is a chance they won't have again to get something special.

Here are some examples of sales promotions:

- Give away novelty items (mugs, pencils, memo boards) to anyone who applies within a certain time frame or to the first 100 applicants.

- Enter applicants' names in a drawing for a prize that suits your target audience. For example, a Walkman radio for youth, groceries for those who are eligible for cheese distributions, or a radio/alarm clock for any age group.

- Give away discount coupons (15% off) to a favorite local store to anyone who applies during a certain month. Arrange the business to give the discounts to anyone who comes in with a coupon.

- Write and give away a free 10-page brochure on job-hunting to the first 75 people who apply after hearing the announcement.

- Do a free resume critique for anyone who applies before a certain deadline. This is very useful for displaced workers.

- Offer free blood pressure screening for a week at a program site.

- Distribute coupons (to people you know are eligible) that can be redeemed for training. The coupon would show a face value that would equal the cost of the training if the participant went to a private institution and received the same training.

- Send coupons good for a free career counseling interview or interest inventory.

- Have a recruitment contest for referral agencies. Give a prize to the staff person from any other agency who refers the most people to your program within one year. The prize can be a donation from a local business person.

Incentives are an important boost for promotion--sales promotions are a multi-billion dollar industry. However, because sales promotions have not been widely used by job training programs, you should experiment carefully.

XIV. CONCLUSION

Throughout this paper we have attempted to demonstrate that effective marketing of JTPA programs is not an easy task, though one which can be accomplished effectively and can result in recruitment of sufficient numbers of eligible clients. Among the various approaches that service delivery area and service provider staff should consider as part of their recruitment strategy are:

1. appropriate segmenting of the client population by psycho- and demo- graphic charateristics to insure that the range of individual and group needs and attitudes are included in the recruitment campaign;

2. development of an effective promotional campaign which demonstrates to clients that JTPA training and employment programs can meet their needs and expectations;

3. avoidance of program/client mismatches, difficult paperwork especially during the application process and uninviting offices;

4. finding the balance between program participation costs and benefits to clients;

5. implementation of centralized "one-stop shopping" centers where clients can be certified and referred for training;

6. development of a strategy which insures client responsiveness to advertising campaigns by utilizing brief, pointed advertisements which focus on benefits of program participation;

7. utilization of informal one-on-one sales techniques such as word-of-mouth, flyers and "free" workshops; and

8. development of positive relationships with employers, media representatives, school officials and others as part of an overall publicity/public relations campaign.

Our experience demonstrates that if local training and employment programs follow the recommendations outlined in this paper, they will witness a marked increase in the quantity and quality of recruits.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jodie Sue Kelly, marketing specialist and co-founder of Cygnet Associates, has nearly a decade of experience in numerous facets of employment training.

Since 1984, her consulting work has centered on helping job training programs solve recruitment, placement and retention problems using modern marketing techniques. These projects have included assisting a large city attract more adult JTPA recruits; a large service provider improve customer relations; a medium city recruit more youth; and an industrial city fill high-skill job openings. Ms. Kelly has also trained nearly 2,000 JTPA professionals use marketing to improve their peformance.

Prior to becoming an independent consultant, Ms. Kelly was senior specialist for 70001 Ltd., in Washington, DC, a national youth employment program. There, she conducted performance audits of the 57-site program network, provided technical assistance, and designed training for two federally funded pilot projects.

Before joining 70001's national office, Ms. Kelly created and operated a pre-employment training and placement program for high school dropouts, doubling the size of the program during its second year.

She holds a Master's degree in Information Systems from George Mason University and a BA in psychology from California University of Pennsylvania.

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INDEX

-A-

active voice 26
adults 13
advertising 1, 6, 7, 11, 12, 13, 18, 22, 25, 27, 33, 34, 39, 43, 44, 48, 51
appointments 26, 31
atmospherics 26, 27
authoritarianism 19

-B-

benefits 6, 7, 11, 25, 29, 30, 34, 35, 36, 37, 40, 43, 45, 47
Besner, Arthur 19

-C-

certification 25, 26, 37
church 44, 52
clergy 44
clients 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 13, 17, 18, 19, 21, 22, 25, 26, 29, 30, 31, 33, 34, 36, 37, 43, 44, 53, 55
Coalition on Human Needs 18, 23
compiled 45
concreteness 19
costs 6, 29

-D-

data 21, 22
decentralized 11
demographics 5, 13
direct mail 33, 45
distribution 12, 23, 31, 33, 47
downscalers 20
dropouts 13, 15, 17, 21, 45

-E-

education 15, 17, 18, 22
eligibility determination 8, 31
eligible applicants 6, 7, 43
employment 3, 5, 13, 21, 34, 36, 37, 45, 46, 47, 52

-F-

fatalism 19

-G-

GED 34, 37, 51

-I-

inner city youth 18
intake 8, 10, 11, 21, 25, 29, 31, 37, 40
intake center 11, 29
Irelan, Lola 19
isolation 19

-J-

Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) 1, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, 15, 17, 18, 19, 21, 23, 25, 26, 29, 30, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 39, 40, 41, 43, 44, 47, 52, 53

-L-

list price 29

-M-

market research 5, 17, 18, 20, 21, 41, 44, 46, 48, 49, 52
marketing 1, 5, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13, 16, 17, 21, 27, 29, 31, 51
mass transit 31
meaninglessness 19
media 6, 9, 11, 17, 43, 51
Michigan 36
Mitchell, Arnold 19

-N-

news coverage 51

-O-

occupations 11
older workers 13
one-on-one 1, 39
orientation to the present 19
outcomes 36, 47
outreach 8

-P-

paperwork 7, 25, 26, 29
personal selling 6, 12, 27, 33, 39
private industry council (PIC) 9, 13, 37
powerlessness 19, 20
price 1, 5, 8, 11, 12, 29, 30, 33, 37
product 1, 11, 12, 13, 20, 25, 26, 29, 33, 43, 44, 45
program planning 8

programs 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, 15, 18, 20, 21, 23, 25, 27, 29, 30, 33, 34, 36, 37, 39, 40, 41, 44, 48, 51, 56
promotion 1, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 25, 30, 33, 34, 37, 55, 56
promotional messages 11, 17
psychographics 5, 13
public relations 1, 7, 27, 51
public service announcements 48, 49
publicity 1, 11, 12, 33, 39, 51

-R-

receptionists 40
recruitment 1, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 16, 17, 23, 25, 26, 29, 31, 33, 34, 37, 39, 41, 51, 55
referral 8, 10, 55
responder 45
response rate 23, 33, 49

-S-

sales 1, 6, 11, 12, 33, 39, 40, 41, 55, 56
segment 13, 15, 48
service center 31
services 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, 17, 18, 20, 21, 22, 25, 26, 29, 30, 31, 33, 34, 35, 39, 40, 41, 46, 47, 49, 52
service delivery area (SDA) 8, 13, 37, 39
social services 6, 20, 21, 33
strategies 8, 33, 39
summer jobs 35
summer program 35
support services 11, 25
survivors 19, 20
sustainers 19, 20

-T-

target 1, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 23, 31, 33, 35, 36, 55
training 3, 5, 6, 7, 9, 11, 13, 14, 15, 17, 20, 21, 25, 26, 29, 30, 34, 35, 36, 37, 39, 40, 41, 44, 46, 48, 49, 55, 56
transportation 5, 9, 11, 30, 31, 35

-U-

unemployed 10, 19

-V-

values 6, 14, 17, 30

-W-

Washtel, Dawn Day 20
welfare mothers 13
word-of-mouth 6, 33, 39, 40
workshops 6, 41, 52

-Y-

youth 13, 14, 17, 18, 41, 44, 48, 55